

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, August 25. 1709.

I Have been a long while perswading you to Charity to Strangers—— I hope, you do not want so much Whetting to that Point, as some People think you do, and I am very willing to acknowledge, that in general the Charity of the People of this City has exceeded all that I could wish or expect, and I doubt not, but the poor People will meet with Encouragement and Support sufficient to settle them among us—— What, tho' Sir W. would not give them a Farthing, tho' he spent 40 Guineas upon a Feast to make his Friends drunk? What, tho' Mr. B told us they were all Papists, and we ought not to encourage them, and therefore he would not relieve them, because they were Enemies?—When even in

that very Case the Command is more express, *if thine Enemy hunger, feed him*—— All this shall not obstruct the poor Peoples being assisted—— Shall I give you, Gentlemen, one short Note of Mine upon that Text of feeding our Enemies, for I am but a brief Expofitor—— It looks, as if Heaven had concluded, you would want no Argument to move, no Command to oblige you to feed your Friends—but made your feeding your Enemies a Duty, lest your Passions should guide you to some Cruelties with them, which were unsuitable to a Christian; but feeding our Friends, our Neighbours our Brethren, this seems so natural, that a Command to it, looks as if it were perfectly needless.

But

But so much for preaching; I would be glad to take the same Method, the Scripture seems to take: These poor People are your Friends, your Neighbours, and your Brethren—and yet I am sorry to say it, we are not without some that are willing to see them hunger, and not feed them, to see them starve in their cool Camp on Black-Heath, and not only not plant them, and not settle them, that they might feed themselves, but not relieve them, in order to help them to feed themselves.

This is strange, and deserves some Satyr; but I am loth to lash the Humour, as it deserves, till we see the Thing farther gone, perhaps these Gentlemen may see their Error. But pray, shall we enquire a little into one Reason some Gentlemen give, why they are against these poor People being settled here? — And tho' I confess it is a ridiculous one, yet I must name it—They say, they will strengthen the Low Church or Whiggish Interest against the Church of England.

This is a most wretched Excuse for not opening your Purses, and I shall make but one Answer to it, for it is not worth more, viz. That it seems a particular Mark of Infamy upon our High-Church Men, that all the Protestants in the World, if they come hither, would be against them. But this by the way.

Another Clamour against these poor People is, That a great many of them are Papists—Nay, some will have it that they are all Papists. One Word of which is not true—— That there are some Papists among them is true, under 400 in about 10000— That a great many of these have renounc'd Popery, since their coming over, is true—— And by the way, if our National Immoralities did not assist to prevent it, many more would do so—But they being, as was noted in my last, fled hither, not for Religion—but for Liberty, this is no Reason, why we should not relieve them; As to their settling here, the Law

*has made a Difference, for the Protestants are naturaliz'd by Act of Parliament, the Roman Catholicks are not, and many of the Roman Catholicks are going back again for that very Reason—— But pray, Gentlemen, remember, that the Roman Catholicks are GOD's Creatures as well as others, and claim a Share in your Humanity, without Distinction, equally to others, as to Matters of Charity; the good Samaritan did not enquire, whether the poor Man that fell among Thieves was a Jew or a Samaritan, tho' the Animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans was greater, than that between Papist and Protestant; for the Text says in another Place, *The Jews have no Dealings with the Samaritans.* But this good Man took Compassion of the wounded Man, as a Man, as a Fellow Creature, and bound up his Wounds, pour'd Oil into them, &c.*

Now, tho' you do not care for planting the Popish Palatines among you, which is a Dispute by it self, yet this is not at all concern'd in your Charity; sure, if you are to feed and cloath your Enemies, you are doubly oblig'd to feed and relieve those that fly to you for Refuge, without enquiring into their Principles, as to Religion; in such a Case, it is not Papist or Protestant is the Case, their Religion is not the Question, but their Distress. Are they Strangers? Are they in Want? Are they destitute of Abode, and without Necessaries, without Shelter, and without Bread? — Are they come hither, fled for Succour, from Tyranny, and from Oppression, and have they cast themselves into your Arms for Relief? — If this be the Case, you are bound to relieve, feed, cloath, and assist them, by all the Laws that GOD has made to direct our Charity; nor is there the least Room to excuse your selves for any of them being Popish, no not if they were Mahometan; it may argue against your settling and planting such of them among you—but it can never be a Reason why you should not relieve them.

MISCELLANEA.

AND what is become of your Remarks about the King of S—n, says one to me, that is a constant Reader of the News-Papers, Why all the Account of a Victory of the Muscovites is contradicted, and the King of S—n is victorious?

It is true, that the News of the Defeat of the Swedes is accompany'd with some Uncertainties—— And indeed the Length of the Way, and the various Circumstances of Things in the North make our Accounts from thence generally not to be depended upon; but yet all the Reason we see hitherto to doubt, the News is, that the Swedish Ambassador in Holland has, as they say, no Advice of it—— And truly, if the Swedes are so effectually routed, as our Accounts are, so as that the King himself fled but with 300 Dragoons, and forc'd to swim the rapid Boristhenes to get away; it is no wonder he has not sent his Ambassador Word of it to the Hague.

But be that as it will, I do not see, that my Remarks on these Affairs vary at all, let which Side soever have the Victory. The Conquests, which the S—e has been pursuing in Muscovy, seem to me to be attended with all the Follies, I ever said they were, be it that he is beaten, or is Conqueror; such as,

1. Neglect of his own People on the Side of Livonia, Courland, and Russia, who have been ravag'd and massacred by the Enemy, without a sufficient Force left to cover and protect them.
2. Neglect of the Protestant Interest, in the Opportunity he had to have arbitrated this bloody War, and with the Breath of his Mouth to have determin'd the Articles, we still contend about.
3. Expoling and sacrificing the Blood of his faithful Subjects, in a War purely to satisfy his Revenge, or his Ambition, or his Personal Glory, not the Safety and Good of his Country—which to

a just Prince is the only lawful Ground of a War, and which, we are told, he might have secur'd by an advantageous Peace long ago.

4. Pursuing a Conquest improbable in its Nature, unprofitable if made, and of a Country, which it would ruin him to keep, if he had reduc'd it.
5. Teaching the Muscovites the Art of War, who may in time become formidable to Europe, from the Experience they gain in this War with the Swedes.

These are the Things; I have formerly objected against the Prudence of this Northern War, and I think, they will stand clear to be argued upon, whether the News of a Battle be true or false.

Indeed, if the King of Sweden is beaten, and kill'd, or taken, AS, if the first be true, I cannot imagine, how he can avoid the last; two Things more may chance to follow, which may be no Injury to the rest of Europe.

1. His Country, if the Nobility of his Country have a Taste of Liberty, may recover their former State, which has been subjected to their Princes for some Years past.
2. Poland may come to a Settlement under King Augustus, which has now for eight Years, at least been the Scene of Blood and Rapine on both sides.

But of these in their more proper Place.

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